



Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries  
Natural Heritage Program



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*Ligumia recta*  
**Black Sandshell**

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**Identification:** This mussel is shaped like an elongated oval, laterally compressed, pointed at one end (posterior) in males, rounded near hinge (anterior); shell is smooth, dark brown to black in color; mother-of-pearl is pink to purple.

**Measurements:** Length is 8 inches.

**Taxonomic comments:** No recognized subspecies.

**Status:** Global ranking is **G5** and state ranking is **S1**.

**Habitat:** Found in gravel and sand in the riffles of medium to large rivers.

**Range:** Mississippi river interior basin and eastern gulf drainages.

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**Food habits\*:** Mussels are continually pumping water through their siphon. Their diet is composed of the various microscopic plants and animals from the water and organic matter from stream bottoms that they filter from this water.

**Reproduction:** Sexes are separate. Glochidia are found on the gills largemouth bass, green sunfish, redbreast sunfish, rockbass, white perch, yellow perch, platy and convict chichlids.

**Reason for decline:** Declines have been noticed in areas where water turbidity has increased. As filter-feeders, the quality of the water that mussels are continuously siphoning is very important. Therefore, water with increased silt or pollutants can interfere with feeding and metabolism.

**Interesting facts:** The purple colored mother-of-pearl is among the most beautiful mother-of-pearl known.

**Known distribution in Louisiana:**



**Dates of documented observations are:** 1979

**References**

- Cummings, K.S., and C.A. Mayer. 1992. Field guide to freshwater mussels of the Midwest. Illinois Natural History Survey Manual 5.
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